

VZCZCXRO6397  
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHKUK RUEHROV  
DE RUEHMS #0528 1961356  
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P 141356Z JUL 08  
FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9798  
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0551  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0439

UNCLAS MUSCAT 000528

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/PPD, NEA/PI, INR/R/MR, NEA/SA/EX/PMO  
LONDON FOR NEA WATCHER  
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E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#) [MU](#)  
SUBJECT: OMAN MEDIA REACTION

1. SUMMARY: Commentaries this week focused on Oman's and the Gulf's relationship to U.S. in the context of the Iran situation. "As Shabiba" reported on the Omani Foreign Ministry's decision not to send an ambassador to Baghdad and criticized the U.S. for allowing Iranian influence in Iraq to grow. "Al Watan" repeated the message that America is allegedly endangering its Gulf allies by allowing tensions with Tehran to rise. State-owned "Oman" praised political progress in Lebanon, asserting that the new government must address issues critical to Hezbollah first. END SUMMARY.

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Oman Rules Out Iraq Envoy  
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2. On July 7, private Arabic daily "As Shabiba" (circulation 20,000) reported that Oman will not send an Ambassador to Iraq, and criticized U.S. calls to erase Iraq's foreign debt. According to the article titled "Arab Embassies in Baghdad":

"The United States continues to pressure Arab countries, particularly the GCC states, to reopen missions in Baghdad. Oman, though, has ruled out sending an envoy, according to [Foreign Ministry Secretary General] Sayyid Badr, because of the out-of-control security situation in Baghdad. The U.S. wants Arabs to reopen their mission in Iraq to counter the increasing Iranian influence, but the alleged Iranian influence was caused by the U.S. Arab ambassadors were in Baghdad in the absence of U.S. ambassadors. Why does the United States want Arabs to rebuild what it had destroyed? Furthermore, the U.S. insists that GCC states scrap all Iraqi debt. The U.S. is the one occupying and running affairs in Iraq, hence it should repay these debts. GCC people have enough financial burdens."

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Gulf Suffers from American Foreign Policy  
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3. Privately Arabic daily "Al Watan" (circulation 42,000) said on July 11 that America's actions don't back up its claims of defending its Gulf allies. "Diplomacy is the Best Means of Defense" said:

"American officials have said repeatedly that Washington is ready to defend its allies. The Secretary of State herself repeated this on many occasions. Such statements, though, have not been accompanied by actions that make the Gulf states feel that they can believe America. In fact, the Gulf only suffers from problems caused by America's foreign policy. If Washington's intention to defend its allies in the Gulf is honest, then its State Department must be able to work independently of any military threats by the Pentagon or advisers who favor military action. The foundations of regional and world peace should not adhere to America's vision alone."

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No Justification For Accusations  
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14. Government-owned Arabic daily "Oman" (circulation 38,000) praised the new Lebanese government, calling for additional steps to build confidence. "Lebanon and New Era" said:

"The Lebanese did well when they announced the formation of their government, despite the difficulties and challenges they faced. There is no justification for any more accusations, threats or warnings or media-backed propaganda. There are two important tasks for the government to do to start new era in Lebanon: restore confidence in the Lebanese political system and secure transparent parliamentary elections. The new president should invite all opposing leaders to discuss critical issues of which Hezbollah's should be at the top of the agenda."

GRAPPO